

"Olde Historic Inn"

Front Street

Scotch Plains, Union County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-414

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

HABS
N.J.
20-Scot Pl.
1-

"Old Historic Inn"
Front Street
Scotch Plains, Union County, New Jersey

Owner: Mrs. Catherine F. Frowery

Date of Erection: 1737

Architect:

Builder: Recompense Stanberry (probable)

Present Condition: Good

Number of Stories: Main unit two and one-half;
wing two stories

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone

Exterior walls - frame
construction, clapboards

Interior walls - plaster

Inside brick chimneys

Roof - pitch

Historical Data:

On maps drawn for the Continental Army a tavern is shown on the site of the present one and is marked "Marselis". The first holder of a license for the tavern of whom we have record is one Jacob Stanberry in 1799. This Jacob Stanberry inherited from his father Recompense Stanberry, Sr., according to the will of 1775, "eight acres here on the plains to son Jacob". Jacob's elder brother Recompense, Jr. operated the tavern for some time. Recompense Stanberry, Sr. came to Scotch Plains about 1689 according to Clayton. He was one of the organizers of the

Baptist Church in 1747 and the first deacon. The date of the building of the tavern is 1737. The date is in the fireplace of the front living room on the first floor. It is logical to assume, therefore, that Recompense Stanberry was the builder of the tavern. It has been according to the license records which do not go back beyond 1799 in continuous operation from that date.

There is no proof that this house was built to be used as a tavern; it is an assumption that this is so. In 1769 a new stage coach line was established, The Swift Sure Stage Line, which ran from Philadelphia to New Hope, then across the river to Flemington, Somerville, Bound Brook, Scotch Plains, and Elizabeth. The first reference to a tavern in Scotch Plains is to one kept by Jonathan Osborn on what is now Front Street, midway between Park Avenue and Terrill Road. This was in 1771. It is also marked on the old continental map. We also find that Amos Swan was keeping a house, "Swan's Tavern", in 1775. Some people have assumed that the Old Historic Inn was the Swift Sure Stage Tavern, but there is no proof of this. Rather it would seem from reading Clayton as if there was still another inn with that name.

Bibliography:

Marsh, R. Scotch Plain's The Story of an Old Community New Brunswick, For the Author, 1936

Clayton, W. W. History of Union and Middlesex Counties, New Jersey Philadelphia, Everts and Peck, 1882

An article in the Plainfield, New Jersey, Courier News of May 9, 1936

Walter E. Peck

Supervising Historian

Approved:

Seymour Williams

SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, F.A.I.A.

District Officer

WJ 11/11/37